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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents 10 easy fun tips for parents to help their children build self-confidence by making them aware of the mathematics all around. These 10 activities were developed to help children master basic math skills, see the relationship between math and everyday activities, and school learning. (ASK)

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You Can Help Your Child with Math!

Ten Fun and Easy Tips

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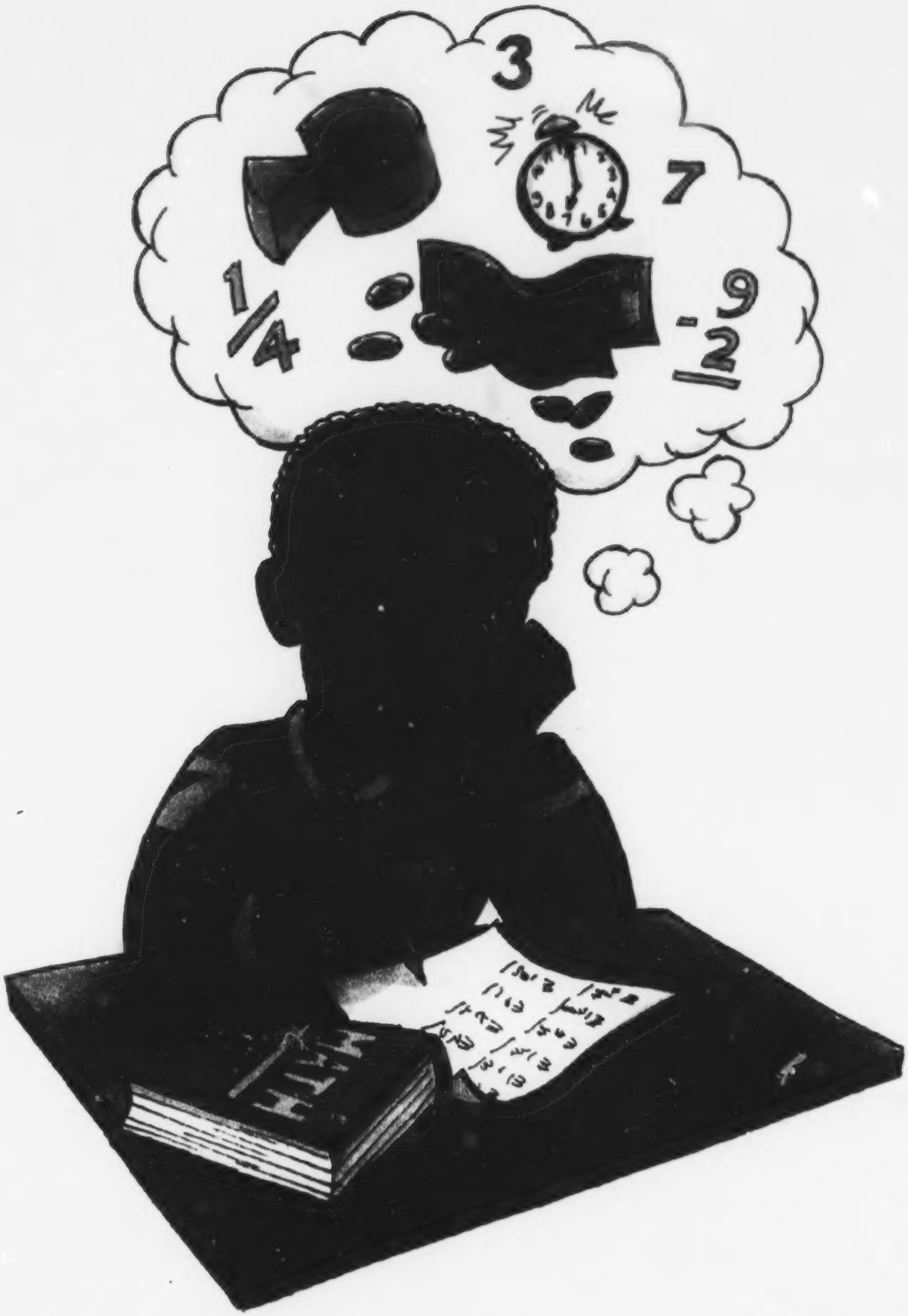
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MATH

A Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

Though often feared by students, math is one of our most frequently used school subjects. We solve math problems every day when we do such routine things as set the alarm to get up at a specified time, measure coffee for breakfast, and leave for the bus with enough time to reach the bus stop. So don't feel that math is too difficult for you or your child. You do it all the time!

At home, you can help your child build self-confidence by making him or her aware of the math all around us. Here are three basic things that you can do:

- **Help your child have a good attitude toward math.**
  Let your child know he or she can be successful in mathematics. Solving math problems is not always easy. But you can encourage your child to be persistent and to view math problems as puzzles or games that are fun to solve.
- **Help your child practice the basic skills—addition, subtraction,**

multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals—so that your child can remember them and use them correctly.
As with other skills, such as playing the piano or batting a ball, math skills are improved with practice. Be sure your child completes school work, and find opportunities for him or her to use math skills outside of school.

- **Help your child understand the steps involved in solving a math problem.** Often the steps in a problem must be accomplished in a particular order. For example, if you want to figure out how many square feet of carpet are needed to cover the floor of a room, you must first measure two adjoining sides, then multiply those numbers to get the square footage. Help your child visualize a problem and plan it step by step.

The ten fun and easy activities that follow will help your child master basic math skills, see the relation between everyday math activities and school learning, and have fun at the same time. Simpler ideas are presented first, followed by more advanced activities to use as children get older.

1

Shapes

To help your young child learn shapes, draw or use yarn to form a circle, square, or triangle. Show it to your child, and introduce the name of the shape. Send your child on a search for items in the house that have that same shape. Ask her to make the shape with her hands or with her whole body too.

2 Counting

Give your child concrete objects to use as he learns to count. You don't need to spend a lot of money—children's toys such as marbles, match box cars, or collections of seashells or baseball cards work fine. Snacks such as popcorn, raisins, M&Ms, cereal, grapes, carrot sticks, and marshmallows also make great counting tools. Kids can eat them afterward as a reward!

Still Counting!

Turn simple jumping, clapping, and hopping activities into counting activities. Encourage your child to count higher and higher by showing interest in her "record" numbers, such as how many times she can bounce on a pogo stick, jump a rope, or get a hula hoop to go around without stopping.

4

In a Flash

Practice simple math facts, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication or division with homemade flash cards. Save old holiday, birthday, and other greeting cards. Your child will enjoy cutting up the colorful cards to make her own set of flash cards. An old deck of playing cards works well too.

Piggy Bank

5

Let your child count the money in the family piggy bank, or get her one of her own. Ask her to sort the change by type of coin and then to count how much money is in each pile. Show or remind her that she can do this by counting in twos, fives, and tens. Then ask her to add up the totals from all the piles to get the grand total. You can give her extra practice by letting her roll up the change in coin rolls.

6 Now We're Cooking!

Let your child discover how useful math can be by helping out in the kitchen. Allow your child to help you measure ingredients for recipes. Show him that using four one-quarter cups of flour is the same as using one cup. Teach him how to set the timer on the stove, and ask him to calculate what time it will be 45 minutes from now when the cake is done.

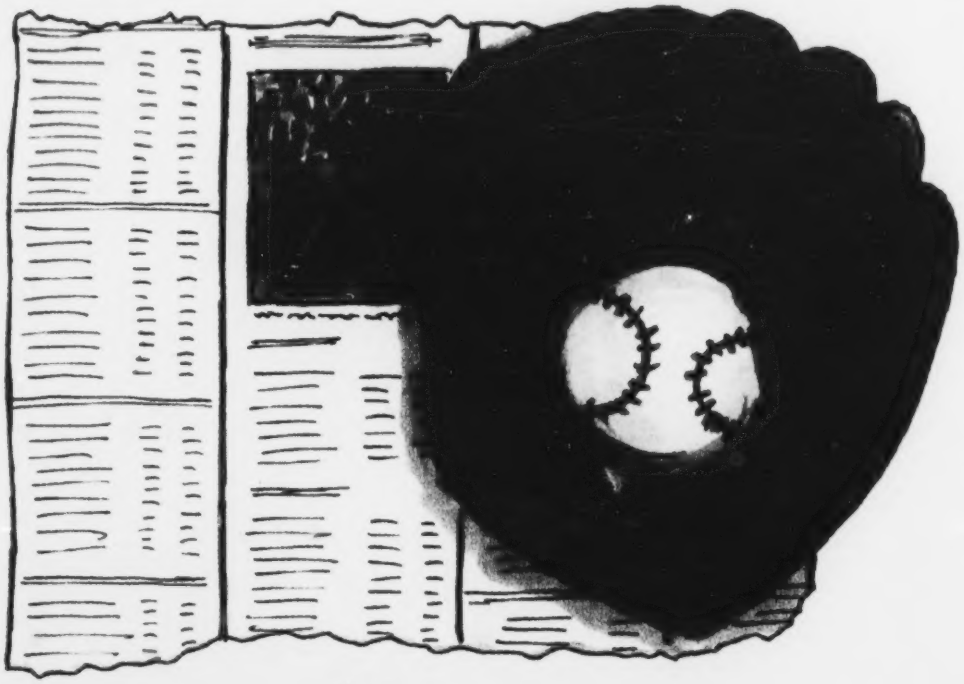
How Far Is . . .?

7

Help your child learn to understand time and distance by asking him how long it would take for him to walk to a specified location. Then take the walk with him and determine if his predictions were correct.

8 Sports Math

Review word problems with your child by using scores in the newspaper. For example, ask him to figure out the number of losses a team had if they played 30 games and had 12 wins. Or ask him to calculate how many games a team played if they had 20 wins and 7 losses. Engage older children in more complicated calculations, such as percentages and averages.



Let's Go Shopping!

9

Play a shopping game. First have your child select 10 items from a catalog. Then have her add the prices to figure out the total cost of the items. Next have her pretend she will receive a certain weekly allowance. Help her figure out how long it would take to earn enough money to buy the items she selected.

10 Home Project

Are you building an addition on your house, putting up shelves, painting a room, or building a piece of furniture? Show your child the scale plans of the addition and explain the ratio used to make the drawing, allow her to measure the boards for shelves, help her calculate how much paint you will need to cover the walls of the room, or let her help you measure the legs for the table you are building.

Conclusion

Most important of all, make the time you share with your child enjoyable for both of you. This will give your child positive feelings toward math and confidence that he or she can succeed.

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